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THE ANTHRACITE COAL STRIKE.

The mine workers in the anthracite coal fields of Eastern Pennsylvania were ordered out on strike by President John Mitchell, of the United Mine Workers of America, Wednesday, September 12, the strike to be inaugurated the following Monday, September 17. On the latter date, at the lowest estimate, 80,000 men and boys (the United Mine Workers claimed 100,000) laid down their tools and quit their accustomed tasks. Before the week closed 125,000 of the 140,000 anthracite mine employees in Pennsylvania were idle. The men remained away from their collieries forty-two days, their number increasing gradually until over 130,000 were involved. They resumed work in a body on Monday, October 29, after nearly every operator had conceded their more important demands and had promised to remedy the other grievances complained of. From less than 8,000 members from among the anthracite coal workers at the opening of the struggle, the United Mine Workers had increased its membership to over 100,000 before the strike was declared at an end. During the progress of the strike the production of anthracite coal was almost entirely suspended, the daily output being estimated at 10,000 tons. The price per ton, as quoted by the big companies at Philadelphia, rose from \$5.50, on the day the strike went into effect, to \$6.75, the day the strikers went back to work.

The importance and far-reaching effects of this great struggle between capital and labor were, of course, connected with the fact that practically all the hard coal mined in the United States and used as fuel by thousands of industries in the Eastern, Middle Western and Southern Atlantic States comes from the territory over which it extended. This great industry, involving the operation of 366 collieries and giving direct employment to 140,583

men and boys¹ is concentrated within an area of less than 490 square miles. In 1890 the capital invested in anthracite mining aggregated \$161,784,473. During the same year \$39,278,355 was paid in wages. The production of anthracite coal has increased, in half a century, from 3,358,899 long tons in 1850 to 54,034,224 long tons (valued at \$104,000,000) in 1899. According to the report of the State Bureau of Mines for 1899 this latter amount was mined in the ten counties of Carbon, Columbia, Dauphin, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna and Wayne. Luzerne, Lackawanna, Schuylkill, Northumberland and Carbon produced by far the largest amount.² All these counties lie in the hills and valleys of the Blue Ridge Mountains, extending from the headwaters of the Schuylkill and the Lehigh rivers northward and westward to the Susquehanna River. The deposits of coal they contain differ so greatly from one another—the formation of the coal and the conditions of mining in each vary so widely—that in trade circles the entire region has become divided into three distinct fields or districts, the Northern or Wyoming and Lackawanna, the Middle or Lehigh and the Southern or Schuylkill.

Into this small territory nine railroads have extended their lines and compete for the transportation of the coal. The intensity of this competition was what first induced the railroads to become mine owners. There are now three general classes of operators engaged in the production of anthracite coal—the railroad mine-owning companies, corporations not identified with the transportation system, and the “independent” or individual mine owners. Thirty years ago the

¹ Of the 140,583 employees, about 90,000 work inside the mines and 50,000 outside. Of the former 36,000 are miners, 24,000 laborers, 10,000 drivers, 3,000 door boys, 800 fire bosses, 500 foremen and 15,812 all others. Of the outside employees, 24,000 are slate pickers, 4,500 engineers and firemen, 2,000 blacksmiths and carpenters, 422 superintendents, 375 foremen and 18,703 all others.

² In 1899 Luzerne produced over 21,000,000 tons; Lackawanna, 13,000,000; Schuylkill, 12,000,000; Northumberland, 4,000,000, and Carbon, 1,000,000,—these five counties thus produced 51,000,000 of the total of 54,000,000 tons.

latter were practically the only operators in the anthracite fields. They now number less than one hundred, and for their own protection have organized themselves into the Anthracite Coal Operators' Association.

The tendency of the railroads to become operators first became marked in 1871. Repeated strikes resulting in the withdrawal of the coal shipments, upon which the earnings of the companies largely depended, coupled with the danger that still other transportation companies would invade the territory, induced the Reading Railroad and the other roads then in the region, at the close of the strike begun January 10, 1871, to take steps toward securing coal lands and opening mines. The first move of the roads was to raise freight charges, most of them doubling and one of them, the Reading, trebling their rates. These rates, as was intended, proved prohibitive; the operators who had resumed, at once closed their mines, and in a short time many of them had sold out to the railroads at what might be called forced sales. The tendency toward a close consolidation of interests on the side of the railroads began about the same period and still continues.¹ These companies now control

¹In 1898 "the controlling interest in the New York, Susquehanna & Western Company was acquired by the Erie Railroad Company largely increasing the latter's interest in the anthracite trade. The Delaware & Hudson Canal Company finally decided to abandon shipments by its canal from Honesdale to Rondout and made a closer contract with the Erie for its northern trade" (*The Mineral Industry*, Vol. VIII, page 169). In 1899 "purchasers of coal lands were unusually active. . . . The steel and iron companies have acquired reserves of fuel supplies and have bought many thousand acres of coal lands." In March, 1899, "the Temple Iron Company was formed and some extensive purchases of coal lands were made by the New York, Ontario & Western" (*The Mineral Industry*, Volume VIII).

This tendency among the railroads is having more far-reaching effects than that of merely driving out individual operators. The roads are rapidly overcoming the competition of the waterways in the transportation of the hard coal product. "Formerly a considerable share of the anthracite coal went to Buffalo by canal, but in recent years this traffic has somewhat decreased, and nearly all the anthracite delivered in Buffalo, either for consumption or shipment, is received over the railroad lines" (Page 144, Vol. III, *The Mineral Industry*). "The steady advances made by the (anthracite coal) combine have almost ruined the Missouri River trade" (Page 91, Vol. I, *The Mineral Industry*). The purchase of docks and yards in the large cities by the railroad companies some think also threatens the elimination of the small dealer.

approximately 75 per cent of the output of anthracite coal, over 60 per cent, according to reliable estimates, being controlled by the Morgan roads alone. As the sole carriers to tidewater, they easily regulate the production of the entire region, operating as they do in all three districts. The railroad mine-owning companies are the Philadelphia & Reading, the Lehigh Valley, the Central of New Jersey, the Pennsylvania, the Delaware & Hudson, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, the Erie and the New York, Susquehanna & Western, the Delaware, Susquehanna & Schuylkill, and the New York, Ontario & Western.¹

These companies not only fix the price of coal upon which depends the wages of the miners, but they are able to determine to what extent freight rates shall enter into that price at tidewater and at other points. The rates to tidewater, for operators not identified with the transportation systems, range from 40 to 68 per cent of the selling prices of the coal at tidewater, the rate depending on the coarseness of the product. The roads thus get on an average 40 per cent of the prices paid at tidewater points, leaving to the operator only 60 per cent. This proportion is now practically universal. Under this arrangement the roads virtually buy the coal at the mine and are then at liberty to sell it for a higher price at non-competitive points. At competitive points, on the contrary, the companies may cut the tidewater price. In this way the individual producer is prevented from being a factor in the market. Tidewater prices may be at one figure and prices at intermediate points at another. Very few, if any, of the individual operators are able to hold the

¹ In 1899 the production and shipments of anthracite coal for these roads was as follows:

	TONS.	PER CENT.
Philadelphia & Reading	9,684,000	20.3
Lehigh Valley	7,589,000	15.9
Central of New Jersey	5,393,000	11.1
Delaware, Lackawanna & Western	6,372,000	13.5
Pennsylvania Coal Company	2,347,000	4.9
Delaware, Hudson & Lackawanna	6,430,000	13.0
Other roads	9,851,000	20.7

market and sell their coal at the best price obtainable at any and all points.

For years bitter wars have been waged by the individual operators against the railroads on account of the exorbitant freight rates. In 1898 the charges by the roads for the transportation of coal became such a serious burden to the towns in the coal region that an organization, called the Anthracite Association, was formed among the chambers of commerce of a number of the cities for the purpose of securing lower freight rates to New York and Philadelphia, and doing away with alleged discriminations. In this way they hoped to lower the selling price and stimulate the consumption of hard coal. The association met with little success. About the same time individual operators in the vicinity of Scranton and Wilkesbarre also took active steps to break away from the conditions imposed by the railroads by having surveyors lay out a road from Scranton to New York. This road when completed was to be called the New York, Wyoming & Western. Nothing beyond surveying the route has yet been done. In one instance, that of Coxe Brothers & Company, also known as the Cross Creek Coal Company, operating in the Lehigh district, the Lehigh Valley Railroad was forced to grant the company the special privilege of running its own cars and engines, manned by its own employees, in special trains over the tracks of that railroad to tidewater. This privilege was secured, however, only because this company built a railroad (the Delaware, Susquehanna & Schuylkill) connecting with all its mines and enabling it at any time to transfer its entire custom to a competing road. As a general thing, the railroads are in a position to charge the highest rate the traffic will bear, making good any losses they suffer as coal mining companies out of their profits as transportation corporations.¹ They charge more for carrying a ton of hard

¹ "The Philadelphia & Reading Coal and Iron Company reports the running expenses nearly equal to receipts, leaving nothing to pay interest on its liabilities,

coal one mile than is charged in Western Pennsylvania for carrying soft coal four miles.

But there is an even worse phase to this railroad domination in the anthracite coal fields. The demand for hard coal has always been, year in and year out, less than could be supplied. More mines are opened and in operation than are necessary to meet this demand. The total production of all the mines now open, if run the year round, (taking 300,000 tons, the daily output for each producing day in 1899, as a fair estimate of the daily capacity and 250 as the maximum number of producing days in a year), would be 75,000,000 tons.¹ In 1899 the total production was only 54,000,000 tons, the average number of working days being only 180. The competition among the railroad mine-owning companies is so keen that none of them are willing to close down anyone of their mines so long as there is enough profit to pay for running it for only half the year. Here is an enormous waste both of capital and labor. The greater part of the former is fixed capital and the charges on it are but little changed, whether the plants are running or idle. During the time when the mine laborer is out of employment there is no other occupation in the coal fields to which he can devote his energies so as to increase his earnings. He must make enough during the days he does work to support himself and his family through the whole year.

while the Lehigh Valley Coal Company's product costs it more than it receives for it. However, most of these concerns transport their own coal and realize their profits in its carriage. The Pennsylvania Coal Company, which confines itself strictly to mining, obtains low rates of freight from the railways, and pays regular dividends. This company, however, has the exceptional advantage that its coal lands were bought many years ago at a small cost and it is not obliged to pay heavy royalties or interest on extravagant first-cost of property, as many of its competitors do."—*The Mineral Industry*, Page 167, Vol. VII.

¹ If the miner worked 250 days the daily capacity would decrease. The time the men work at the different collieries is judged by the time the breaker is in operation. But the miners and other mine employees work during days when the breaker is idle in cleaning up their working places or breasts and in getting the product in such condition as to be able to get out the greatest quantity possible on the days when the breaker is running. Under these conditions the miner, it is estimated, works on the average four-fifths of the year, while the time, as given by the operation of the breaker, may be put at a little over one-half the year.

With a capacity to produce anthracite coal so much above consumption, some form of agreement among the operators was absolutely necessary. It is plain that the tendency of such an agreement would be to keep the poor mines, which should be shut down, running and to limit the good mines in their output. An agreement of this nature does exist among the operators.¹ Whether it be called a "trust," a "combine," a "pool," or by some other name less unsavory to the consumer is immaterial. Among the operators it is known as "an understanding among gentlemen." By this agreement each colliery has "allotted" to it monthly a certain number of tons as its product for the ensuing month. In this way the entire output, estimated beforehand by the sales-agents at a general meeting, is distributed among all the collieries. These sales-agents at the same meeting agree upon "circular" prices, and recommend to the operators a restriction of the total tonnage to the amount they have estimated that the market will take at the prices fixed. This understanding, appearing so nicely on paper, does not and cannot, so long as there is no stronger sanction back of it, successfully regulate the output. All that is necessary to break it is for a given colliery to increase its output above the "allotment" in consequence of a special order for coal placed with it. The fact of the matter seems to be that these "recommendations" are continually ignored. In any case the statistics of production show that the collieries rarely, if ever, keep within the allotments.

This operating of too many mines has a disastrous effect upon the miner. It keeps constantly on hand an oversupply of labor, thus limiting the number of working days² and

¹ The first step among the operators to combine to restrict production and maintain prices was taken as far back as 1872. Prior to that year, however, the miners tried, in 1869, to "make such arrangements as will enable the operator and the miner to rule the coal market," and the way the miners went about this was to propose to the operators that after that time their wages be based upon the selling price of coal. It was with this object in view that the sliding scale was adopted in the Schuylkill and Lehigh fields.

² The anthracite miner did not average more than 204 days from 1890-93; 100 days were about the average from 1894 to 1897; he worked 150 days in 1898 and 180 days in 1899.

causing irregular employment to prevent over-production. But worse even than this, it has led to the introduction of the cheap pauper labor of Europe with its low standard of living.

All the blame for the introduction of Hungarians, Poles, Slavs and Italians into the hard coal region cannot perhaps be laid at the door of the operators. The miner may be, in part, held responsible, in that in order to make the most out of work in the mines he has taken under contract, he has striven to secure the cheapest labor possible. The miners themselves claim that this course has been forced upon them by the operators. In substantiation of this claim it is certain that these low types of European labor, about which so much complaint is heard to-day, did not begin to come into the anthracite coal fields until about 1875, four years after the railroads began to become coal-operating companies. This class of labor was increased no doubt by the act of Congress passed in 1874 "to encourage immigration." It is well-known that at that time companies were formed to carry out the intention of Congress. Within five years, by 1880, the Huns, Poles, Slavs and Italians had begun to increase in such large numbers as to threaten to drive out the English, Irish, Scotch, Welsh and German miners. With their low standard of living they soon forced down the rate of wages, and it was this that caused the strike of 1887-88.

These foreign laborers are still pouring into the coal region in an ever-increasing number.¹ They have invaded every district and even every mining town throughout the three fields. The English-speaking miner with his higher and better ideals and wants is unable to compete with this new labor and is being forced to abandon his occupation for some other or sink to worse conditions in life. In nearly every breaker old men—men appearing very old even when in middle life—can be found seated alongside the breaker boys

¹Statistics on this very important subject collected by the census of 1900 are not ready for publication. My conclusion is drawn from personal observation during a seven weeks' stay in the anthracite coal region.

picking slate for seventy-five to ninety cents a day. They passed from the cradle into the mines as breaker boys : they pass out of the mines into the grave as breaker boys.

The English-speaking miner demands a neat two-story frame house with from four to seven rooms, with a front porch and yard attached. He wants none but his own immediate family or very near relatives with him. The non-English-speaking miner will live in a one-room hut built by his own hands on a hill-side, of drift-wood gathered at spare moments from along the highway. In not a few of these huts the most conspicuous articles of furniture are mere bunks built in rows along the wall. He is not particular with whom or with how many he lives except that they must be of his own nationality. Nor is he as fastidious about his dress as his English-speaking brother. The foreigner seems to have no particular objection to cast-off clothes. In a funeral procession of over 5,000 strikers, nearly all of whom were foreigners, at Shenandoah, nearly every man wore clothes long out of fashion—hats, coats and trousers either bought by some second-hand dealers in the large cities and sent to the coal fields to be disposed of or purchased by the foreigners upon landing in this country. The English-speaking miner, as a general thing, wants his suit to be new even if it must be of a cheaper grade of cloth. As to material the foreigner is the best clothed miner in the anthracite fields.

These are a few of the many differences between the English-speaking miner and the European laborer, showing the source of the advantage of the latter in competition. Another advantage, especially on the side of the Poles, is that they will venture into dangerous places to mine coal where few of the other nationalities will go. The Italians, on the other hand, will not, as a rule, go into the mines at all. Their competition is thus confined to outside work. Under the laws of Pennsylvania the foreigner, as well as others intending to become miners, is required to spend two years as

a laborer in the mine before he can become a miner, but this law is violated more often than it is obeyed, even by those for whose protection it was enacted. The certificates which every miner must show when he applies for work are handed about with as little regard to the law as are railroad passes among politicians.

In the districts of the anthracite region are employed some fourteen different nationalities: Americans, Austrians, English, Germans, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, Hungarians, Italians, Poles, Russians, Swedes, Slavs and Greeks. Of the Poles, Huns and Italians, Dr. Virtue in his article on "The Anthracite Mine Laborers," published by the Department of Labor in its Bulletin of November, 1897, says:

"The United States census of 1890 shows the total number of these nationalities in the five anthracite counties to be 28,216. This is 10,307 less than the foreign-born Irish in the same counties, 5,627 less than the foreign-born Germans and Austrians combined, while of English there were 22,729 and of Welsh 23,404. There is no means of knowing the number of the various nationalities employed at the mines, but it is certain that a far greater proportion of the Polish, Hungarian and Italian population are so employed than of the other nationalities named. A fairly accurate indication of the number and growth of this class for the last half dozen years may be had from the following figures furnished by the Philadelphia & Reading Coal and Iron Company, showing the 'nationality and percentage,' but not the place of birth, of the employees at their mines in 1890, 1895 and 1896:

Number and per cent of the various nationalities employed at the collieries of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal and Iron Company, 1890, 1895, 1896.

NATIONALITY.	1890.		1895.		1896.	
	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.
American	4,719	19.1	5,765	20.6	5,838	20.6
English	2,088	8.4	1,960	7.0	1,799	6.3
Irish	6,887	27.8	6,450	23.0	6,025	21.3
German	3,709	15.0	3,471	12.4	3,207	11.3
Scotch	210	.9	223	.8	168	.6
Welsh	1,282	5.2	1,112	4.0	1,037	3.7
Polish	4,287	17.3	5,955	21.3	6,805	24.3
Hungarian	1,466	5.9	2,800	10.0	3,180	11.2
Italian	86	.4	245	.9	211	.7
Total	24,734	100.0	27,981	100.0	28,360	100.0

"These figures account for about 70 per cent of the mine laborers of the Southern field. Assuming the same proportions for the whole region, there are not far from 50,000 of the class of which most complaint is made employed at the anthracite mines. The table shows a rapid increase of the class since 1890. In that year the three nationalities formed 23.6 per cent of the employees of the Reading collieries. In 1896 they formed 36.2 per cent. It may be said that the estimates of this element of the population are invariably higher than here set down. But those estimates are usually based upon impressions rather than the actual returns from the collieries."

Contemporaneous with this increase of European labor in the anthracite fields there has been a noticeable decrease in the last four years in the total number of men employed in the production of hard coal, due partly to the introduction of machinery and partly to a more intelligent direction of labor. From 1890 to 1896 the number of employees increased from 109,166 to 149,670; but in 1897 the employees numbered 149,557; in 1898, 142,420; and in 1899, 140,583.¹

These are the more important general conditions affecting the production of anthracite coal. Weak and defenceless as the individual miner was against such forces he, for long, could do nothing to prevent what, to many, seemed inevitable—a gradual decrease in earnings and a consequent lowering of his standard of living.

The miserable condition of the anthracite mine workers had for several years engaged the attention of the United Mine Workers of America. In fact, ever since the partial success of that organization in the bituminous fields of Western Pennsylvania, in 1897, its officers have had in view a betterment of the condition of the hard coal miner. In that year this organization succeeded in having adopted in the soft coal region an agreement between the operators and the miners in accordance with which their representatives now meet annually, about April 1, in joint convention and

¹ This decrease in the number of laborers has not resulted in any decrease in production, as is shown by the following figures: In 1890 the production was 40,089,355 tons; in 1896, 48,074,330; 1897, 46,947,354; 1898, 47,145,174; and in 1899, 54,034,224 tons.

determine, among other things, upon the wages of the mine workers for the ensuing year. Prior to this time members of the organization had gone into the Lehigh and Schuylkill districts and by 1896 had formed about ninety-four locals. It was not until 1899, however, that members of the National Executive Board and National Organizers were stationed in the anthracite region. For more than a year before the strike was begun these men were at work preparing the miners for the struggle.

The monumental task which they accomplished in such a short time cannot be even imagined by one unfamiliar with the actual conditions in the anthracite region. They had to organize men of fourteen different nationalities and with almost as many different languages, religions, customs, and standards of living; they had to allay distrust on all sides, born partly of ignorance and partly of a past full of failures in efforts to attain the very objects that the United Mine Workers were striving for; they had to overcome a most bitter feeling of jealousy and hatred which had grown up between the miners of the three fields as a result of past strikes, and they had to encounter conditions of mining differing to such an extent in the separate districts as to make almost impossible common and general grievances. These representatives of organized labor went before the men of the anthracite region with a history on nearly every page of which was written failure in strikes undertaken and destruction to every union which had attempted to fight the miners' battle. They had to confront living witnesses among the old and more influential miners who foretold the failure of any and all efforts directed to securing for the men better conditions, and who testified that the condition of the miners after strikes had heretofore in all cases been worse than the state of living which preceded. Not only were all these almost insurmountable obstacles to be overcome before a strike could be called, but the United Mine Workers of America had to deal with a normal surplus of labor, and

men bidding against each other for work ; they had to face a market over-supplied with coal ; they had to meet the ever present danger of inability, at critical times, to guide and control the storm they were arousing ; they had to fight the bitter, and, at times, almost crushing opposition to organized labor of the operators and railroads. That the union successfully met and overcame these obstacles is more to the credit of the organization and its officials even than the successful outcome of the strike.

The strike itself was the most successful—practically the only successful one—ever conducted in the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania. It was the first time in the history of hard coal mining in the United States that the entire region had been involved in a strike for an increase in wages. All previous strikes, with the possible exception of that of 1887-88, were to prevent reductions in wages. That there were general grievances among the men in all three districts is shown by the large number of mine workers who laid down their tools and extinguished their lamps on the first day of the strike. Never before had the anthracite mine workers been brought to realize the solidarity of interest that they recognized on that day.

When the United Mine Workers of America went into the territory¹ to organize the men, it took the three fields into which the region had been divided in trade circles and made of each a separate district, with a president at its head. The Northern field was called District 1, the Middle, District 7, and the Southern, District 9. The men of the Wyoming and Lackawanna field (District 1), were the first to be thoroughly organized under the banner of the union, and naturally they were the first to take steps looking toward an amelioration of their condition. Before the inauguration of the strike, at a meeting of this district held at Scranton

¹ The Miners and Laborers' Amalgamated Association and the Knights of Labor were both destroyed in the anthracite coal fields by the failure of the strike of 1887-88. The Workingmen's Benevolent Association had met a like fate in the strike of 1875, as had also Bates' Union in 1869.

in January, President Mitchell was petitioned by the mine-workers of the Wyoming and Lackawanna Valleys to call a general strike of all anthracite miners. After conferring with the presidents of Districts 7 and 9, the petition was refused. At their next quarterly meeting in April steps were taken to secure a meeting of the miners from all three districts, and in July the union mine workers of District 1, at a convention held at Pittston, petitioned the National Executive Board to call a convention of all three districts. This petition was granted, and on August 13 a joint convention was held at Hazleton. This convention invited the operators to meet representatives of the miners in joint convention in Hazleton, on August 27, at the same time detailing the grievances under which the anthracite mine workers were laboring, and which they desired to have remedied. The operators were unrepresented when the subsequent convention was called to order. The miners then drafted a scale of wages for each district together with general conditions of employment, and asked of the National Executive Board permission to strike for its adoption and for the redress of other grievances, provided the officials of the organization should not be able to effect a settlement within ten days after the application was made. Efforts on the part of interested parties to settle the difficulties peaceably, through arbitration or other means, postponed the declaration of the strike from September 8, the date when the ten days expired, to September 12. In the meantime the operators as a class did nothing toward preventing the threatened conflict. They were loud in their claims after the strike began that no complaints of any kind had been made to them by their employees, and that all they knew of grievances existing among the men had been conveyed to them through the newspapers.

The scales of wages demanded by the Hazleton convention differed for the three districts, but similar conditions of

employment were to apply as far as possible to the whole region.¹ These conditions of employment were:

- (1) "An advance of 20 per cent on all day labor now receiving less than \$1.50 per day; 15 per cent over present prices on all classes of day labor now receiving \$1.50 and not over \$1.75 per day, and 10 per cent advance on all day labor receiving more than \$1.75 per day."
- (2) "Abolishment of the sliding scale system now in practice in the Lehigh and Schuylkill regions."
- (3) "No miner shall have at any time more than one breast, gangway or working place, and shall not get more than his equal share of cars or work."
- (4) "Abolishment of the erroneous system of having 3,360 pounds to the ton, and that 2,240 pounds shall constitute a ton."
- (5) "A checkweighman shall be hired by the miners, and allowed to represent them on the head of each breaker, and see that the weight is correct, and that the dockage is fair."
- (6) "Reduction in the price of powder to \$1.50 per keg."
- (7) "Abolishment of the company store system."
- (8) "Abolishment of the company doctor system for miners and compulsion to pay one."
- (9) "Compliance with the State law which says that all industrial concerns shall pay their employees semi-monthly and in cash."

These conditions of employment, taken separately or collectively, are in their final analysis demands for an increase in wages.

The wage problem in the anthracite coal fields is a most complicated one. The difficulties in the way of a satisfactory treatment of it are almost insurmountable. Here are at work not only the natural forces tending in most occupations continually to force wages to a lower level, but also artificial means to complicate and aggravate the situation and to keep the earnings of the miner at the lowest possible point.

In the first place the cost of production is not the same in

¹ In the Schuylkill district powder was already selling at \$1.50 a keg. The sliding scale had never been in use in the Wyoming and Lackawanna district. The company store and company doctor systems were not in force at all the collieries.

any two mines.¹ This is due principally to natural conditions, *i. e.*, the formation of the seams and the quality of the coal. In some mines the coal lies horizontally, as in parts of the Wyoming and Lackawanna district. Here the coal is taken out mostly by sinking shafts from the surface to strike the coal in the basin or centre of the valley, so that it may be run by gravity to the foot of the shaft from either side of the basin. In other places the coal lies in an inclined position and is reached by slopes sunk from the surface and run with the pitch of the seam. In still other places the deposit comes so near the surface that the upper crust of dirt and stone is removed and the coal is then mined in what is called a stripping. Then again there is the drift mine, in which a tunnel is driven horizontally through the seam into the mountain side where the coal outcrops. The cost of mining varies in these different kinds of mines. A difference in the cost of mining in different mines is also due to the quality and quantity of coal in the seam. In some places the deposit is of the very best anthracite, containing comparatively little slate or other refuse, while in other places it is so full of impurities as to barely pay the cost of mining. The seam also varies in different mines, being only two feet wide in some and as thick as 100 feet in others. In some mines the coal has to be mined from a greater depth and in more dangerous places. Besides these and other natural conditions, there are many artificial causes making a difference in the cost of production in the various mines. In some, more timber is needed than in others; in some, more coal has to be left for pillars; in others, more water has to be pumped out; there are also differences in cost in tracks, haulage, ventilation and supervision. In every district, however,

¹ "There are few published reports as to the present cost of mining and marketing anthracite coal, but figures are available for some of the companies. Mining costs the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company \$1.34 per ton; the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company, \$1.31; the Lehigh Valley Coal Company, \$1.90; and the Philadelphia & Reading Coal and Iron Company, \$1.71. It costs the Delaware & Hudson 41 cents per ton additional to market the product, and the Philadelphia & Reading \$1.13.—*The Mineral Industry*, Page 167, Vol. VII.

there are several mines operated that barely pay their owners for being kept in working. These are the marginal mines. The day the strike went into effect and the men left the collieries, announcement was made by several of the operators that they would allow certain of their mines to fill with water and abandon the plants for good, the reason being that the cost of keeping the mines in repair, free from the accumulation of gas and the collection of water, would be more than the plant was worth. For a year or more these mines had barely been meeting expenses.

The conditions of mining, it will thus be seen, are different not only in the several districts, but even in different collieries in the same field. This makes a uniform rate of wages for the entire region or a general plan for determining the rate almost impossible. Such a plan would in some cases work to the injury of a particular operator, and in others to the detriment of the employees of certain companies.

These natural differences are partly but not wholly responsible for the different systems of paying the wages of the mine workers. The rate of wages is arrived at by one scale in the Lehigh district and by a different scale in the Schuylkill, while a third plan is employed in the Wyoming and Lackawanna district. The rates in consequence differ in all three fields, as well as between different collieries in the same field. Even in the same colliery the same rate is not paid to all the men. The inside employees get one price for their work, the outside employees another, and the breaker boys and old men are paid a third. Of the inside employees the miners get one rate, the laborers another, the drivers and runners a third, door boys and drivers' helpers a fourth, while other inside men get still another. So it is with the outside men. Engineers and firemen get one rate, carpenters and blacksmiths another, slate pickers a third and other outside men a fourth. Even among the miners themselves in nearly every colliery men may be found working some at so much per yard, and others at so much per ton and still

others at so much per car. Nor do all the men working by the yard receive the same rate, the kind of passage driven and the use or non-use of timber affecting the price. Even the time worked, which is a very important element in determining the wages of the miner, is not the same in all the collieries nor for all classes of workmen in the same colliery. In fact, at the time of the strike, a general inequality of wages existed throughout the districts even where the seams, mode of working and general conditions were similar. Different men doing similar work, even in the same colliery, were paid differently.

For years, indeed ever since 1869, the miner of the Lehigh and Schuylkill districts has had his rate of wages determined by the selling price of coal. The miner was and is still an employer of labor as well as an employee. The gross wages he receives depends upon the number of days he works, the presence of little or much slate or refuse in the coal he mines, the number of pounds he has to dig to make a ton and upon the temper of the docking boss. His net wages depend upon the rate he is compelled to pay his laborers¹ and the number of laborers he has to employ, the prices he has to pay for powder, squibs, oil, and for keeping his tools in repair and on numerous other conditions beyond his control. As a consequence of these complications the miner may put forth the same amount of energy to-day as yesterday without obtaining the same wage for both days. The same man working in different seams will make different wages; two different men working next to each other in the same seam will not make the same wage. No miner not under the day-wage system, and not always the latter, can tell how much his earnings will be at the end of the month or when pay day comes around.

Despite all this confusion, it can be said generally that

¹ In the Wyoming and Lackawanna district the miner is compelled to pay his helper or laborer one-third of his gross earnings. It must be remembered that the laborer is not employed by the operator but by the miner himself.

there are two systems of paying wages in the anthracite fields of Pennsylvania—the contract and the day-wage systems. The former includes the car or volume, and the yard or measure plans, which are in use in all three districts, and the ton or weighing plan, which is used only in the upper Wyoming and Lackawanna field. About 90 per cent of the miners in both the Wyoming and Lackawanna and the Schuylkill districts and 80 per cent of those in the Lehigh field work under the contract system. The others are paid day wages. The miners working under contract are the best paid workmen about the collieries.

The car or volume plan of paying the miner is generally in vogue in the Lehigh and Schuylkill districts and in certain collieries in the Wyoming and Lackawanna field. The price paid the miner for mining and loading a car ranges from 80 cents to \$1.22, the cars containing from 96 to 161 cubic feet each. In those mines where the car plan is in use the price paid the miner is fixed, depending on the character of the vein and the size of the car. This price must of necessity be different in different collieries. Under the yard or measure plan the rate of mining in the Lehigh district was fixed at $43\frac{3}{4}$ cents to $49\frac{1}{2}$ cents for 48 cubic feet, the extra eight feet (40 cubic feet of coal making on the average a ton) counted, so it was understood by the miner, as refuse. Where the ton or weighing plan was in use 65 to $71\frac{1}{2}$ cents was the price paid per ton of from 2,750 to 3,360 pounds the extra weight (2,240 pounds making a ton) being for refuse.

In the Lehigh field, where about 15,000 men and boys are employed, the rate of wages has been regulated since 1869, by what is known as the sliding scale. According to this scale, when the prices of anthracite coal averaged \$5.00 per ton at tidewater points, miners were to receive for mining and loading coal, 87 cents per car. Generally skilled miners working by the day received 21 cents an hour, or \$12.60 a week of 60 hours, and first-class laborers \$10.80 a week.

On this \$5.00 basis there was a ten per cent sliding scale. For every ten cents above \$5.00, for which the coal would sell at tidewater, the miner would receive one cent and the operator nine cents¹; in case the price of coal fell below \$5.00, the same rate was to apply in reducing the wages. In the mines of G. B. Markle & Company the rates were as follows: Oakdale first, 96 cents per car; Oakdale second, \$1.17 per car; Highland first, \$1.20 per car; Highland second and Highland fifth, \$1.24 per car. Inside wages were to be as follows: Miners 21 cents per hour; gangway labor, 18 9-10 cents per hour; platform labor, 17 2-10 cents per hour; company men and three mule drivers, 18 cents per hour; two mule drivers, 14 6-10 cents per hour; single mule drivers, 12 8-10 cents per hour. Gangways were to be paid for at \$4.75 per yard; airways, \$3.16 per yard; cross-cuts, \$1.88 per yard; opening breasts, narrow, \$24.80; opening breasts, wide, \$8.00. The above prices and wages constituted the basis. When the prices (of the New York Lehigh Coal Exchange Monthly Circular) averaged \$1.00 more or \$1.00 less than the above \$5.00 average, f. o. b. (at Perth Amboy, N. J.), there was to be a corresponding rise or fall of ten per cent on the above basis, except the gangway per yard, which was always to be the same as the average of the monthly prices, and airways per yard, cross-cuts per yard and opening breasts, narrow and wide, which rose and fell on the same percentage as the gangway rose and fell. There was to be no change in prices and wages of less than one per cent at any time.

The scale for the Schuylkill district affected about 55,000 men. It was adopted at the same time as the Lehigh scale, and differed from the latter in that it took as the basis for determining the rate of wages of the miner the selling price of coal at Port Carbon, with a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent sliding scale.

¹The operator would not receive a net gain of nine cents per ton, as the other classes of labor in and about the mines would also get an advance of one cent. The illustration is to show the effect the sliding scale has on the contract miner.

When this scale was adopted Port Carbon, on the Schuylkill River two miles above Pottsville, was an important interior shipping point. When coal sold there for \$2.50 per ton, the miners were paid \$2.00 per day of ten hours for skilled labor, this being the basis price. The miners not working on contract (about ten per cent of the total number) were to receive \$12 per week; inside laborers, \$10.20; outside laborers, \$8.10. When the price of coal went above the basis the miner was to receive one-third the increase (if the price advanced three cents, he was to get one cent); when it fell below that price he was to stand a reduction in his wages of one-third the price. The method of deciding upon the price of coal at Port Carbon was to choose by lot five collieries from the total number in the lower field shipping 30,000 tons or more. The collieries selected made returns of the prices paid them for their product, prepared sizes, *i. e.* from lump to chestnut, at Port Carbon. Then the average of these prices determined the wages for the month.¹

In the Northern or Wyoming and Lackawanna district and at those collieries in the Lehigh field where the sliding scale has never been in force a large percentage of the mining has been done on the car or volume plan at a certain fixed price per car. Some of the companies in these fields also paid according to the ton or weighing plan, a number of them in the upper Wyoming and Lackawanna district using the ton system exclusively. In the Northern field wages are admitted to have been higher than the basis rate under the sliding scale, but as to net earnings there has been practically no appreciable difference between the miner in the Northern field and his fellow worker in the Middle and Southern districts.

¹From a table published by Dr. Virtue, in the Bulletin of the Department of Labor, for November, 1897, it is shown that in the 108 months from January, 1888, to December, 1896, the average price returned from the collieries drawn to determine the monthly rate of wages, was in 32 of them above the basis (\$2.50), and in 76 below the basis. The highest the price ever went above the basis was 46 cents (\$2.96), while the lowest below was 53 cents (\$1.97).

The objection of the miner to the sliding scale was that since they were no longer represented¹ at the drawing of the collieries upon which wages in the Schuylkill district depended the system could be used arbitrarily by the operators. It is enough to say that under the conditions they distrusted the returns made. The system, once the plan of the miners to secure what they thought their just share of the product of their labor, had become, from the miners' point of view, a means by which the operators could keep wages below the basis. Their feeling on the matter was tersely expressed by a transparency carried in one of the monster parades at Wilkesbarre which said: "Our wages are based upon an antiquated sliding scale that invariably slides downward."

Another objection was that certain changes had come about in the mining and marketing of coal since the scale was adopted which would make a lower basis necessary if they were to secure just wages. These changes, which were principally in the production of larger amounts of "small sizes" of coal which sell in the market at lower prices than the former sizes, they claimed, kept the average price per ton at both Port Carbon and tidewater points below the basis price. In consequence their wages under the system would nearly always be below the basis rate. If the system was to be continued, they argued, the basis rate should be lowered to conform with the lower level of prices. It is true, as Dr. Virtue says, in the article before referred to, that these "small sizes" are not "included in the average prices upon which wages are based in the Schuylkill region, but 'chestnut' is, and the proportion of this size which sells for twenty-five or thirty cents below stove coal has greatly increased compared with the higher-priced sizes." While this, in a way, is as much to the disadvantage of the operator as of the miner it must be remembered that now the

¹ The destruction of their organizations in the strike of 1887-88 left the miners without the power to demand their right of representation at the drawings.

operator sells what was heretofore waste dug along with the coal and dumped in the culm banks and for which he formerly had to pay the cost of handling with no return.

The power the railroads have secured in recent years to fix the price of coal through freight charges has also made the sliding scale objectionable to the miners. The Lehigh miners found that tidewater prices, upon which their wages were based, were nearly always lower than prices in the interior markets, in which were sold two-thirds of the product. The Schuylkill miners, whose wages were based upon the price of coal at Port Carbon, were not long in finding out that with the product at a certain price at tidewater the higher the freight rate the lower the price of coal at Port Carbon. It was a scale that could be worked two ways by the railroads, and always to the detriment of the miners.

Such being the conditions of wages in the anthracite fields, it is difficult to get at the average wage. The operators claimed during the strike that "the wages of miners average from \$2.00 to \$4.00 per day. In fact the rates paid for mining labor compare favorably and are as high, if not higher, than the rates paid for the same class of labor by railroads and other industries." The officials of the United Mine Workers of America, in their statement to the public, claimed that the average wages of the anthracite miner for many years had been less than \$250 annually.

For the purpose of ascertaining what miners earn who are industrious and able to work whenever employment is offered, Mr. A. S. Bolles, in 1888 and 1889, made an investigation¹ of the earnings of the most and of the least skillful miners during those years. He secured this information by asking the operator of each colliery for the monthly earnings of the ten most skillful and industrious contract miners employed in his colliery, and also the number of days they worked. The same facts were sought with respect to the

¹ Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs for Pennsylvania, Part III, for 1888 and 1889.

least skillful. The result showed the aggregate earnings of the 450 anthracite coal miners in 45 collieries, who were classed as the most skillful, representing those who earned the largest amounts in such collieries, to be \$330,327.80, or \$734.06 per man. The average daily earnings were \$2.98 per man, and the average number of days each miner worked was 246. The highest average daily wage paid by any one of the 45 collieries to the 10 most skillful miners employed therein was \$4.08, an average yearly earning, working 203 days, of \$804.40. The lowest average daily wage paid the 10 most skillful miners was \$2.02, an average yearly earning, working 265 days, of \$538.24. The highest daily wage paid the 10 least skillful miners was \$2.75, an average yearly earning, working 217 days, of \$597.32. The lowest daily wage paid the 10 least skillful miners was \$1.31, an average yearly earning, working 231 days, of \$302.24. In the inquiry continued in 1889, the miners in each colliery being divided into ten equal groups according to their earning capacity, the average daily wage for the different classes was shown to range from \$3.55 for the first class to \$1.79 for the tenth class. Some of the miners earned over \$1,000 annually, in one case as much as \$1,400. For the great majority of the miners, however, from \$400 to \$600 a year was the amount earned. Figures from the investigation show the average daily earnings of all the contract miners at eighteen representative collieries for the year 1889 to have ranged from \$2.64 for the first class to \$1.28 for the tenth class.¹

The accompanying table of wages of mine employees in the Lehigh district was prepared for the writer by Benjamin James, member from Pennsylvania of the National Executive Board of the United Mine Workers of America, and

¹ These inquiries took no account of the earnings of those who were sick and did not or could not work regularly; nor of the earnings of those who died, or went away before the close of the year; nor of those who were employed to fill their places. These averages, therefore, are higher than the actual average wages for each class.

Wages of Mine Employees in the Lehigh District.

	Number employed.	Per cent of total number.	Wages paid per day of ten hours.	Average daily wage.	Number of days worked in 1899.	Average total earnings.
Miners	3,634	21.51	191.5
Miners' laborers	1,890	11.28+	\$1 15 to \$1 75	\$1 35	191.5	\$258 52½
Drivers and runners	785	4.64—	1 17 to 1 67	1 40	191.5	268 10
Door boys and	252	1.49+	{ 55 to 84	70	191.5	134 05
Drivers' helpers			{ 70 to 1 00	85		
Other inside day men	2,254	13.38+	1 06 to 2 06	1 60	191.5	306 40
Engineers and	765	4.54+	{ 1 35 to 1 80	1 49	191.5	285 34
Firemen			{ 1 35 to 1 60			
Carpenters and blacksmiths	387	2.30+	1 60 to 2 00	1 75	191.5	335 12½
Slate pickers	2,734	16.23	{ 40 to 75	50	191.5	{ 95 75
Boys			{ 75 to 90	85		
Men	3,721	22.09	1 06 to 1 25	1 17	191.5	162 77½
Other outside day men						224 05

gives the miners' side of the question. It was made up from the wages paid by the operators in the Middle field, which may be taken to be about the same as those paid in the other districts.

Eighty per cent of the miners in this district work on contract and 20 per cent by the day. Engineers and firemen receive on the average \$40.50 per month. As a rule the miner cuts six loads of coal for \$6.00 (\$1.00 a car being a fair average). Out of this he pays for powder, oil and repair of tools and the wages of his help. Where the laborer's pay is fixed at so much per day, as is generally the case, the miner must pay him \$2.00 in the Northern and \$1.75 in the Middle and Southern districts. After all these expenses are deducted the miner's net earnings are about \$2.30.¹

The striking miners did not claim that a general reduction in their wages had been made in recent years, but they argued that there had been a decrease in their earnings due to their being compelled to load larger cars without more pay, to put more "topping" on the old cars, to increase the yardage and the number of pounds required for a ton under old rates and to submit to more and more dockage of that which they did mine. They were compelled to mine more coal under greater difficulties at the same price. They claimed also that exorbitant charges for mine supplies, such as powder, oil, cotton, fuses, etc., and in some cases increased charges at the company store, went to lessen their earnings. In this way and by an increase in the prices of necessities their real wages were reduced to such an extent, they stated, that they were no longer able to support themselves and

¹ Taking \$30.00 as a fair average of the monthly earnings of the anthracite miner, the cost of living for a family of five, as given to the writer by an intelligent miner whose reputation for truthfulness can be vouched for, is as follows: Rent, \$4.00; shoes, \$1.00; clothing, \$5.00; household goods, \$2.00; doctor and medicine, \$1.50; church or priest, 50 cents; coal, \$1.50; insurance, 50 cents; total, \$16.00. This leaves \$14.00 for food for five during the month—a little over three cents for each of five persons for three meals a day. The laborers average about \$20.00 a month.

their families, that they were compelled to take their children from school at a tender age, and were even forced to swear falsely to the age of their boys so that these might earn money in the breaker. They submitted the fact that the miners in other regions had their wages increased, those in the bituminous field as much as 40 per cent along with a reduction of the daily hours of labor to eight hours. After expressing the belief that the increase in the market price of coal should be shared with them in better wages, the miners demanded a fair share of the increased profits which they said had been and were being secured for the product of their labor.

To these statements some of the operators replied in the newspapers. They denied that the prices of necessities had risen or that the earnings of the mine workers had been reduced. "The facts are," they said, "that the scale of wages has not been reduced in over twenty years notwithstanding the numerous periods of business depression and repeated reductions in the soft coal mining regions, which enabled the soft coal operators to mine at such low cost as to take away a large percentage of business formerly supplied by anthracite coal. Not only has there been no reduction in wages or earnings of the men in the anthracite region but advances have been made in a great many mines to meet changing conditions, and it is a fact that this year anthracite labor has been more fully paid, getting more days' work and consequently larger earnings than has been possible in many years.

"The statement of the mine workers that the market prices of coal are higher than in years is not true. The average prices are not higher now than in recent years and are much below the prices received in 1892. The profits of the business have decreased largely,¹ due to the increased

¹A comparison of figures given by the tenth and eleventh census seems to substantiate this claim, in that it is shown that the cost of mining per ton has increased 31 cents (\$1.03 in 1880 to \$1.34 in 1890), while the value per ton at the mine has increased only 11 cents (from \$1.47 in 1880 to \$1.58 in 1890).

cost of mining coal from the lower depths and long distances under ground, and have also been materially decreased, due to the rise in price of materials used around the collieries. This has affected all the companies very severely. As to their demand that we increase the price of coal to the public in order to increase their wages, we cannot do this under existing conditions and retain the market for anthracite coal against bituminous coal. A strike and a suspension of mining would have a very injurious effect on the anthracite trade, losing trade to bituminous coal that could never be recovered."

The other demands of the miners may be divided into two classes, those to prevent indirect reductions in wages and those to prevent a lessening of earnings after wages are paid. They demand that no miner shall have at any time more than one breast, gangway or working place or get more than his proportional share of cars or work; the abolishment of the system of having 3,360 pounds to the ton; the employment of a checkweighman, to be paid by the miners, who shall be allowed to represent them on the head of each breaker to see that the weight is correct and the dockage fair, and a reduction in the price of powder. All these are to prevent indirect reductions in wages after the nominal rate has been determined. Their demands that the operators comply with the state law in regard to semi-monthly cash-pay and that the company store and compulsory payment of the company doctor be abolished are aimed at the devices which now prevent the miner from enjoying his full earnings even after his wages are paid.

Under the conditions of employment drawn up by the Hazleton convention the miners demand the ton or weighing system for all three districts, and they want the ton to be of 2,240 pounds, as provided for by the laws of the state. In their scale of wages they want the pay for mining fixed at from 71½ to 86½ cents per long ton. Under the weighing system in use before the strike the price paid was from 65 to

71½ cents per ton of from 2,750 to 3,360 pounds. The operators insisted that where the miner was paid by weight the price must be fixed on the basis of paying so much for a quantity sufficient to produce a ton of prepared coal. This, he claimed, took as much as 3,200 pounds, and in some cases even more. There would have been some justice in this claim but for the fact that the impurities loaded in a ton by the miner were allowed for by the dockage system in vogue at all the mines by which the miner was docked oftentimes ten, fifteen or twenty hundred pounds in one day for refuse. This was in addition to being compelled to load the heavy ton. The refuse the miner must necessarily load in a ton of coal was thus counted against him twice. The same was true where the rate of mining was fixed at 43¾ cents to 49½ cents for 48 cubic feet. Forty cubic feet usually make a ton and the extra eight feet were to be counted as refuse, making docking unnecessary. Nevertheless the miner was subjected to the dockage system here also, and from 3 to 25 per cent of his coal was taken from him in this way along with the extra eight feet. There were also cases where the miners, instead of furnishing a well-rounded heap on the car at the breaker, as was originally agreed, were compelled little by little to increase the amount of coal in each car by building the same perpendicularly from six to eighteen inches above the edge.

The system of dockage, it will readily be seen, has much to do with determining the wages of the miners. Usually the docking boss is an English-speaking miner. He has absolute authority to determine how much refuse and how much clean coal is in a car. In most cases he is stationed at the top of the breaker, and when the car-load is brought to the top to be dumped he marks the amount with which the miner is to be credited. That such a person holding such a position will be without prejudice or feeling toward the miners is expecting too much of human nature. Usually the boss is disliked by the miners. He is regarded in nearly

every case as a too zealous employee of the company, and is set down by a majority of the people who know his personality, as a hard-hearted, driving master. The miner may work hard all day to find, when he comes out of the mine on the changing of shifts, that he has been docked half and sometimes two-thirds of the coal mined. In one case the writer knows of seventeen cars which were condemned in rapid succession as they came out of the mine. In another case a miner was docked half a car when he had loaded no cars at all. In a third case, out of 116 cars mined by a miner as a month's work, forty were docked for refuse. Of course these may be, and no doubt are, extreme cases, but none the less they furnish ground for the miners' demand that they shall have a representative, paid by themselves, to see that they get credit for the coal they mine.

Another indirect method of reducing wages was by the sale of powder to the miners. Of all the grievances complained of probably none drew to the strikers the sympathy of the public as much as did this overcharge for powder. In discussing this much vexed question one must bear in mind that powder is simply one of the tools of the miner. It is a tool somewhat different from the others he uses, however, in that its first use destroys it entirely. This use must therefore repay its cost if loss is to be avoided.

It has been estimated that on the average a miner can get out thirteen cars of coal with one keg of powder. In all but the Schuylkill district this powder cost \$2.75 a keg. In mining one car of coal this one tool cost the miner a little over twenty-one cents, about one-fifth the gross price he received for his product. For the year ending December 31, 1899, a total of 1,372,691 kegs of powder were used in the anthracite region by the miners. This powder cost the companies only from 90 cents to \$1.00 a keg. The custom of selling powder to miners at an unvarying price was adopted during the Civil War. At that time the price of powder rose and fell almost daily and the operators and miners

finally agreed that for their purpose the price should be fixed at \$3.00 a keg. If the cost went above that price the operator was to bear the loss; if it fell below the miner was to be the loser. For a time the companies actually sold powder to the miners at a loss. When the price of powder was fixed at \$3.00, it was used as the basis for arriving at the wage rate paid for mining. Since the war, though the cost of powder to the companies has decreased so materially, the miners in the northern and middle fields have been able to reduce its cost to them by only 25 cents a keg. This reduction was made without changing the wage rate, and was therefore equivalent to an increase in wages. In the Schuylkill district the employees of the Reading Company had the price of powder reduced to \$1.50 per keg, but along with this reduction a change was made in the basis rate for mining. Notwithstanding the difference in the price paid for powder, therefore, the miners in the upper and middle districts received no less wages than the miners in the Southern field. The high price had, nevertheless, been a source of continual annoyance to the men, who were compelled to pay it and who did not understand why they should pay \$2.75 for what the companies bought for \$1.00.¹

The conditions which brought about indirect reductions in the wages of the miner were sufficiently deplorable, but even more discouraging were the devices by which his earnings were lessened after his wages had been determined. The hard-coal miner of Pennsylvania, living usually in a small mining town, is under a system of complete if not absolute paternalism. He lives in a house built and owned by the company, he buys his food and clothing at the com-

¹ The operators did not attempt to deny that the price of powder to the miners was much above its cost to them, but they claimed that the rate of wages of the miners was not less than it was agreed it should be when the price of powder was fixed. Any reduction in the price of powder, they argued, without an equivalent change in the basis determining the rate of wages, was nothing less than an increase in the wages of the miners. The operator said the decrease to them in the cost of powder was no more than compensation for the increase in the cost of mining which they had to meet.

pany store, when sick he is attended by the company doctor, and if he is a Catholic, his church dues are paid by the company. In fact, all those duties, the performance of which cultivates independence, ambition and the other qualities essential to individual and social development, are taken from the shoulders of the miner and performed by the company. It is not difficult to find mine workers in the hard-coal region who never see or handle one penny of their wages the year through. All their debts are contracted with and paid by the company employing them. An illustration of this dependence is furnished by the form of agreement which existed before the strike between one of the companies and its employees. It read as follows :

—, PA., . . . , 188 .

I, the undersigned, . . . , an employee of — Company, miners and shippers of coal at —, Pa., do hereby acknowledge that I have this day had and received from the said — Company, the sum of \$. . . , in full payment of all sums of money due me from said firm as wages, or otherwise, for the month of . . . , 188 , and in settlement of all sums due me prior to and including said months, hereby ratifying and assenting to all deductions of any and every kind that the said — Company have at any time heretofore made from the amounts due me as wages, salary or on any other account while in their employ. I acknowledge that the following is a correct statement and settlement of the balance due me; to wit:

Wages for the month of . . . , 188 , \$. . .

DEDUCTIONS.

Merchandise account . \$. . .	Powder account . . . \$. . .
Butcher's account	Blacksmithing
Rent account	Mine supplies
Church dues, etc.
Physician's bill
Board bill
Teaming account
Coal account
Balance due me	\$. . .

In consideration of the premises, I do hereby consent that the said several sums shall be deducted from the amount due me as above

stated, and paid to the several parties entitled thereto; and to this end I do hereby release, assign, transfer and set over unto —— Company, and the several parties entitled thereto, such an amount of the wages due me as may be required to pay said bills and accounts as shown by the foregoing statement.

AND WHEREAS, It may occur that I am now and shall hereafter become indebted to the same or other parties on similar accounts, while I remain in the employ of the said —— Company, I do hereby authorize and direct the said —— Company to pay such accounts and bills for me and deduct the amounts so paid from all wages, salary and sums of money now due or hereafter to become due to me, and to that end I do hereby release, assign, transfer and set over unto the said —— Company, and to the several persons to whom such amounts may become due, so much of the wages or salary now due or that may at any time hereafter become due from the said —— Company as will suffice to pay said accounts.

Witness my hand and seal the day and year first above written.

In the presence of [L.S.]
 [L.S.]

It is easy from long distance, theoretical standpoints to denounce the company store and company doctor systems, but the fairest way is to look at them in the light of the conditions from which they have sprung. When a mine was first opened the land for miles around, with the possible exception of the public roads which had been opened for general use, belonged to the company. On this land, after the mine had been located, the company laid out a village, with a view to good drainage and good water supply, opened the street or streets, erected houses for mine employees, placed the school and perhaps a public hall, assigned land for the church or churches, and performed similar functions usually allotted to the inhabitants of towns and villages in the exercise of their civic responsibilities. The company or general store would be located near the main office of the company. In nearly every case it was the only store to which the miner could go to purchase necessities for himself and his family.

The community which grew up was isolated from other towns and formed a small world unto itself. Early in the life of this village occasion arose for the services of a physician. The town being small there was not a sufficient demand to induce a doctor to locate among the people. The company had to meet the emergency, and it did so by making the entire community support the physician by taxing single men fifty cents and married men \$1.00 a month. This was necessary for the good of the community, though it may have worked to the inconvenience of a few.

In the course of time we find population increasing in the coal region. Towns spring up nearer the old ones, lines of communication are opened and means of transportation are brought in, and the mining village, heretofore isolated, begins to be brought into contact with other and larger towns. Business concerns in the cities are ready and willing to send wagons of goods each day to this village. It may be that lower prices are placed on the goods to secure the trade of the inhabitants. Soon the miners begin to pay attention to the prices charged them by the company store, and if there is a difference in favor of the city concern, as is often the case, they naturally want to deal where they can get the goods the cheapest. In the meantime the company store has become a source of profit to the company which it does not care to lose. The big store in the large city is able, with its thousands of purchasers, to undersell the small company store which in most cases depends upon a population of a few hundred. Compulsion and exorbitant rates begin to be the complaint of the miners.

So it is in the case of the company doctor. There are many physicians in this large city who are willing to visit the miner and his family in the small mining town whenever their services are needed. The miner would have to pay this physician only when there was sickness in his family. Believing that he would be saving money, he wants to bring about such an arrangement. He raises a cry against the

company taking money from his wages for this purpose and dictating what physician he must employ.

While conditions have thus been changing the relation of the miners to the company in the small villages, the system of regulating those relations has remained the same. Neither the operators nor the miners have realized sufficiently that with changing relations there must be new methods of dealing with the problems of communal life if the best interests of both are to be preserved. The company store and the company doctor were for the good of all under old conditions; they are to the injury of both when compulsion becomes necessary to their continuance, as it now undoubtedly is in nearly every mining town. The companies in all the large cities where miners live have, without an exception of note, abolished these systems. The company store and the company doctor no doubt in many cases prove a source of profit to the company. The operators certainly would not long continue them at a loss. Nearly every one of these stores in the anthracite region at the present time is conducted by individual operators. None of the large companies, such as the Delaware and Hudson, Coxe Brothers & Company, the Lehigh & Wilkesbarre, the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company, the Lehigh Valley, and the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, now conduct company stores nor collect for any stores whatever. They pay their employees in cash between the first and the twentieth of the month for the preceding month. Nor do all the operators have a company doctor. Where these systems are still in use the miners have moved for their abolition. And along with this change they ask for semi-monthly pay as another aid to rendering them independent.

All the demands of the United Mine Workers of America were not granted by the operators. The striking miners went back to work after notices had been posted at all the important collieries promising the employees an increase of 10

per cent in their wages. In the Wyoming and Lackawanna and the Lehigh districts this 10 per cent increase was to include a reduction in the price of powder from \$2.75 to \$1.50 a keg. In the Lehigh and Schuylkill districts the sliding scale was abolished. The operators, in their posted notices, stated that they would take up with their men any further grievances they might have.

Throughout the struggle the miners retained to an unusual degree the sympathy of the public. This was no doubt due to the confidence the public reposed in the leaders of the strike and the control these leaders exerted over the strikers. There were only two cases of bloodshed during the whole forty-two days of tension, one at Shenandoah, where a spectator, a foreigner, was shot and killed, and the other at Oneida, where a special guard of Coxe Brothers & Company was shot and killed. Both the shootings took place in Schuylkill county. Nevertheless there was much more rioting than the public was led to believe. Hardly a day passed that disturbances did not occur over large areas. It so happened, however, that these did not result in bloodshed, and they did not therefore receive from the newspaper correspondents the attention that was given to the Shenandoah and Oneida shootings.

The operators tried in more ways than one to break the strength of the United Mine Workers during the progress of the strike. When the conflict was inaugurated by the Union the agreement between G. B. Markle & Company and its employees, the company being one of the "independent" operators controlling four collieries in the Lehigh district, was brought up to show the public that the strikers were not sincere in their demands. In this agreement the employees had promised to submit any difficulties they might have with their employers to arbitration, "by our choosing a competent man and their choosing one, and if these two men cannot agree, these two must choose the third, and their decision, or the decision of a majority of them, to be binding."

The men had also promised under the agreement that under no consideration would they enter into a strike, and that they would not be governed by any labor association in settling any difficulties while in the employment of G. B. Markle & Company. Violation of this agreement seemed to lay the miners open to the charge of a breach of faith. It was largely owing to the lucid explanation of President Mitchell that the public was brought to see that the grievances complained of could not be settled by concessions made by a single operator, and that the only course for the men was to stand together as a unit till the railroad coal operating companies should unite in a settlement.

Another way in which the operators attempted to break the strength of the strikers was through the Philadelphia & Reading Coal and Iron Company. This company employs about 27,000 men and is by far the most influential company operating in the Schuylkill field. A great majority of its men went out on strike out of sympathy for the miners in the other districts, having themselves no particular grievances. To induce these men to return to work this company posted notices offering them an advance of 10 per cent in their wages. Fear was expressed, even by some of the Union leaders, that many of these employees, of whom a large proportion were of foreign birth, would accept the offer and thus lessen the United Mine Workers' chances of success. But the strike leaders were able to keep these men from returning to work.

The success of the United Mine Workers of America in this strike will result to the advantage of both operators and miners. If there is any one thing certain as to the future of the anthracite coal industry it is that the cost of mining must be reduced more and more. Heretofore the easiest way to reduce this cost has been to reduce the wages of the mine employees, either directly or indirectly. Now that the miners are strongly organized they can successfully resist efforts at reduction along this line. The operators will

be compelled therefore to turn their energies to reducing the cost of mining, where it should be reduced, by improving the management and superintendence of their properties, partly through a closer consolidation of their interests, but even more through invention, the introduction of improved machinery, the employment of skilled labor and the better direction of labor. The strike has thus, it is believed, put a stop to a development in the anthracite region which was of permanent benefit to none and started development along lines full of promise for the future.

FRANK JULIAN WARNE.

Philadelphia.